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APPROVED FOR RELEASE – DISAPPEARANCE OF AMELIA EARHART 2025 REVIEW

Clue to Death of Amelia Earhart At Hands of Japanese Reported

Saipan Natives Recall Plane Crash of 23 Years Ago, a C. B. S. Man Says

A report that Amelia Earhart might have been executed by the Japanese after she made a forced landing near the Pacific Island of Saipan twenty-three years ago today was broadcast yesterday by a radio correspondent.

The famous woman flier disappeared on a hop from New Guinea to Howland Island during a round-the-world flight. She was accompanied by Fred Noonan as navigator.

Don Mozley of the Columbia Broadcasting System said yesterday that a team of reporters led by Fred Gurner had found four natives on Saipan who remembered seeing a plane ditch off Saipan and watching the Japanese take the two occupants to jail after fishing them from the water.

One native was reported to have said he had been invited by the Japanese to see a white woman hanged but had refused to go.

"All the islanders believe that Miss Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were executed out of sight of the local population," Mr. Mozley said. "The Japanese were determined that no American would ever tell the world they were fortifying the Island of Saipan." The island was the scene of heavy fighting in June and July, 1944.

There have been reports in the past that Miss Earhart and Mr. Noonan had been caught and killed by the Japanese, but this was the first account of any material evidence on their fate.

When the pair left Lae in New Guinea they were aiming for Howland Island, a speck of land only a mile across and 2,556 miles from their starting point. The last authenticated radio message received was that they were 100 miles short of their destination and running short of fuel.

Saipan, in the Marianas, is nearly as far from Howland Island as their starting point was and on a radically different course. It is almost due north of Lae, while the course to Howland is only a little north of east. If they arrived at Saipan, they had gone almost at right angles to their proper route.

Mr. Moyley said that a C. B. S. news team, diving in the bay off the former Japanese naval base, had found the wreckage of an American airplane of that period. Paul Mantz, who equipped Miss Earhart's plane was reported to have said that a generator they recovered from the bay looked like a special unit he had installed for her. He was reported to be trying to trace its serial number for positive identification.

Associated Press

Amelia Earhart

The disappearance of the blonde, boyish-looking woman pilot aroused world interest. She had been making news for ten years with her flying feats, including the first solo flight of the Atlantic after the one by Charles A. Lindbergh. Her frank smile was familiar to newspaper readers around the globe.

Ten ships, 102 United States Navy aircraft and more than 3,000 men were used in searching vast areas of the Pacific for some trace of the missing airplane.

Miss Earhart's husband, George Palmer Putnam, former book publisher, clung to the hope that the missing pair might be safe on some small island but without communication. For many months afterward there were periodic rumors of some clue. But nothing definite developed.

A fifty-five minute radio report from the team that visited Saipan is to be broadcast by WCBS tonight, starting at 7:05 o'clock.